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Greetings from Baghdad. Trust all is well with our family members and supporters back in the United States. We continue to be engaged daily in operations here. Every week our troops are improving their proficiency at their jobs, making their work areas more efficient, and maintaining their equipment, vehicles, and combat systems. Most of the mud from the last two weeks has dried up. The temperatures dipped over the last few days, but are back to normal. We'll be sending our first soldiers home on Environmental Morale Leave (EML) in February. Soldiers will fly from Baghdad to Kuwait. For soldiers going back to the United States, they will board a chartered aircraft to Atlanta or Dallas. From Atlanta or Dallas, they will fly to their leave destination on commercial aircraft. All their tickets will be processed in Kuwait for their aircraft connections (both charter and commercial). For soldiers going to Europe or other destinations outside the United States, they will fly to Frankfurt Airport in Germany and from there, forward to their leave destination. Soldiers are authorized 15 days of EML with the leave date starting the day after arrival at the commercial airport nearest the soldier's leave address. Enjoy this leave with your soldiers. All of you – both soldiers and family members - have earned it. Now on to some news from each of our units...

The HHC InnKeepers are setting the standard within the battalion. PV2 David Newman, of the S2 shop, received my Battalion Commander's Coin of Excellence this week for his hard work and "never quit" attitude. PV2 Newman is responsible for tracking all of the intelligence and updating the computer system that my staff and I use to brief the Commanding General. In addition to all of this, PV2 Newman is responsible for making the access badges that allow entry into the Battalion and Division Headquarters. All of this makes PV2 David Newman a "Player of the Week". The Second "Player of the Week" is PFC Jackie Mandrell. PFC Mandrell is a 63B, light wheel mechanic, but has been working outside of her military occupational specialty since arriving in Iraq. PFC Mandrell has been working in the Division Mailroom handling all of the Official Mail for the entire Division. Even though this is not the job she was trained to do, she has proven herself through her hard work and dedication. PFC Mandrell is part of a dual military couple. Her husband is also serving in Iraq. Each and every Soldier in HHC is doing an outstanding job supporting the Division Headquarters. As always, thanks again to each of you. Your letters, boxes, and emails brighten every day. Now let's check in with the fine soldiers of the Division Troops Company.

The Division Troops Company had another busy week. You should all be proud of the proficiency and steadfastness that the company has been demonstrated as we work to complete their mission here in Iraq. We'll highlight

the soldiers in the Ironhorse Visitors Bureau this week. Their job it is to prepare and welcome all distinguished visitors who come to see the Division Leadership. We get a lot, thus these soldiers are working especially hard. They work the visit agenda's, transportation coordination, and event and location set-up. These troops are often the first and last Ironhorse soldiers our visitors see when they visit. It's a team effort on each of these visits, but the key players in the Visitors Bureau are Captain Tina Cathey, Master Sergeant Melvin Pernell, Specialist Elizabeth Remy, and Private First Class Frank Crisafulli. All have been doing a great job making the Division shine for our important dignitaries and guests. Great job, troops! Next up are the Division's finest communicators, A Company, STB.

Now that the network has begun to settle in some of the soldiers in the Command Post Detachment have been able to take on new challenges whether it is online classes or getting buff. In fact Men's Health magazine may track the progress of the soldiers I mentioned in my FRG newsletter last week (the Buff Squad) and may write an article on them. Whether in the gym or out pounding the ground the Extension Detachment continues to excel in all areas. Of special note this week is SSG Nicholas Williams. He received an Army Achievement Medal (AAM) for his outstanding work with developing a Standard Operating Procedure and training guide for the Secure Mobile Anti-Jam Reliable Tactical Terminal or the SMART-T, as we refer to it. SPC Ernesto Aviles and SGT Ace Baker received the Army Good Conduct Medal. SPC Gary Tuggle received the Army Achievement Medal for his work during the Division's Mission Readiness Exercise and a Certificate of Achievement for his support of the Battalion's Organization Day last summer. Your signal soldiers miss all of you back home dearly and are keeping you in their hearts and prayers! Let's move onto the Best Band in the Land, the Jazz Knights!

Hello Family Members of the 4ID Band! They've been Busy, Busy, Busy! The Jazz Combo (MSG Steve Mohacey, SSG Sean Kerley, SSG Josh Distefano, and SGT Brian Archer) and the Brass Quintet (SFC (P) Steve Foxx, SSG Bonnie Foxx, SGT Jeremy Jackson, SPC Grady Kersh, and SSG Henry Reyna) performed during the Martin Luther King, Jr. luncheon at two local dining facilities. The music was well received and the dining facilities prepared an excellent feast that added a touch of home. I wish I had a recording to send you, because the groups were in rare form. On another note, (no pun intended), they have a newly formed Rock Band who's name is still a secret (but the members are not, they are SGT Danny Arizmendi, SSG Distefano, SGT Louis Feliciano, SGT Chris Williams, SGT Michael Agee, SPC Russell Windsor, SPC Cindi Lowrey and SPC Sam Stevens). Under the direction of SGT Arizmendi, this group already rocks. The Rock Band will be performing their premier show in February on one of the neighboring base camps. Although they are working long hours, the moral of the band is very high. Please continue to send your care packages and love, because these are the elements that are needed to help sustain these troopers during this tour. The 4ID Band sends their love and asks

that you remember them in your prayers. Now onto the Dealers of Delta Company, STB.

Greetings from D Company. This week's focus will be on the section within G2 run by MAJ Merle Bickford and his section NCOIC, SFC Cecelia Nash. The section is responsible for looking at intelligence across the Division Area of Operations. Also in the section are three technical experts or warrant officers, CW3 John Lothers, CW2 Maria Skyles, and WO1 Jay Langton. Of course, the back bone of our Army is well represented in the section by several great NCOs - SSG Sara Reynolds, SGT Nakia Shaw, SGT Jason Sadlo, and SGT David Nicoll. Last but not least are their troopers - SPC Carlton Bowekaty, SPC Ira Waltrip, PFC Jesse Brune, and PFC BJ McNeill. The soldiers are also very focused and motivated toward completing our mission here. PFC McNeill was recently promoted to PFC and next month SPC Bowekaty will be promoted to Sergeant. The entire section is thankful for all the packages that the families are sending and the goodies that they get to share with each other. Now onto the hardworking journalists in the MPAD Detachment.

The hardworking soldiers of the MPAD continue to seek out new and interesting stories about the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division soldiers and their mission!! Part of their job is to tell the story of how great your soldiers are doing. But another part of their job in this operation is to show the successes of the Iraqi security forces, mainly their army and police. We are also showing the many improvements going on across the country. They have been writing and producing stories on the growth of the Iraqi government to include improvements on their essential services, such as schools and hospitals; and how much the people here appreciate having our help getting their democracy started. One of the great broadcast journalists we have is the newly-promoted SGT Frank Merola. SGT Merola is a news videographer from New York City. He has been in the Army Reserve for three years. Since we arrived he has done stories on the Iraqi Army, Soldier promotions and a joint medical team visit to a neighborhood in Aqurqf. SGT Merola has enjoyed learning about the culture and meeting the Iraqi people. We hope you get a chance to see their stories and read about your soldiers in The Ivy Leaf newspaper. Now over to A Company, 1-22 IN to finish up our weekly update.

The past few days have been remarkably similar for the Gators. They are in control of all of their responsibilities and have set into a rhythm of daily activity. Except for a couple of minor injuries – pinched finger, bumped head - the troopers are all safe and living well. CPT Troy Parrish had an opportunity to visit the Regulars recently, and is pleased to report that the living conditions and services are remarkably better on our FOB. SPC Roger Kelley was selected by the company as their stellar performer of the week. His attitude, initiative, and work ethic are unmatched by anyone else in the company. He has single-handedly got this company up and on its feet. Thank you to all the friends and family who have sent packages and letters. They have started receiving mail

now and it has made a notable change in the motivation of the troops. Thanks for your support.

Well, that's all for this note. Again, thank you for all your support, Emails, letters and packages. Be proud of your soldiers here on the ground in Iraq – they are all doing a phenomenal job in very demanding conditions. Please continue to keep us in your thoughts and prayers as we are keeping you in ours. Continue to look after one another every day. Please feel free to contact my Rear Detachment Commander, Captain Jeff Jordan, for any issues you need help with. He can be reached at (254) 449-3184, or Email at [Jeffrey.j.jordan@us.army.mil](mailto:Jeffrey.j.jordan@us.army.mil).

Sincerely, LTC John W. Baker  
Baghdad, Iraq  
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